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SUBJECT: DRC ELECTION CAMPAIGN UPDATE

¶1. (U) Summary: Plans for a debate between President Kabila and Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba have been scrapped because neither camp could agree on the format for the encounter. Neither Kabila nor Bemba has personally campaigned as the official campaign period comes to a close, although Bemba's MLC party had planned to hold a rally in Kinshasa on October 27, the final day of the campaign. All election materials reportedly have been delivered to the country's voting stations in advance of the October 29 vote. MONUC and Congolese security officials are continuing their patrols in Kinshasa and reinforcing their positions elsewhere in the country. The security situation remains calm, although scattered incidents of campaign-related violence have been reported in both the east and west. End summary.

¶2. (U) The DRC's High Media Authority (HAM) announced October 25 the planned October 26 debate between President Joseph Kabila and Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba will not take place. HAM President Modeste Mutinga said in a press conference that because neither candidate's camp could agree on the format of the debate, the Media Authority would be unable to organize the event. According to Mutinga, Kabila's representatives wanted each candidate to be recorded separately, though responding to the same questions from the same journalists. Bemba's camp had wanted a one-on-one debate to be moderated by a pre-selected panel of journalists.

¶3. (U) The proposed debate would have been one of the only second-round campaign appearances by either Kabila or Bemba. Neither candidate has left Kinshasa in October, leaving the work of campaigning in the provinces to others. Olive Kabila, the president's wife, just completed a country-wide tour on her husband's behalf, visiting the provinces of Orientale, North and South Kivu, and Katanga, as well as Eastern and Western Kasai. Bemba has been represented by his father, who is currently campaigning for him in Orientale province. High-ranking party and government officials have also been busily stumping for both candidates throughout the country. The official campaign period ends at midnight October 27.

¶4. (SBU) Bemba-controlled television station CCTV had announced the Vice President would hold a Kinshasa rally October 27 at Tata Raphael stadium, where violence occurred after a similar event July 27 in the run-up to first-round elections on July 30. A senior official of Bemba's Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC) indicated October 26 the party has canceled the rally but we are awaiting final confirmation. A youth group supporting Bemba and his Union for the Nation coalition marched through the streets of Kinshasa October 25 without any major incident.

¶5. (U) MONUC deputy spokesman Jean-Tobie Okala said October

25 that all election kits have been delivered to the 50,045 polling sites across the country. Each kit contains the entire set-up material for a polling station, including ballot boxes, voting booths, tally sheets, and ballots. Okala said the delivery of material was especially difficult for the second round as much of the country is in the rainy season, thereby making many roads impassable.

¶16. (U) Several minor incidents of campaign-related violence have been reported in the past few days. In Equateur province, Radio Okapi reported that Kabila ally Nzanga Mobutu was stoned by protesters while holding a campaign meeting in Yakoma. Partisans of Bemba and Kabila engaged in fistfights and rock-throwing in the Bandundu city of Kikwit. Police were eventually called in to disperse the crowds and fired warning shots into the air. Kikwit's mayor has called for both sides to restrain their supporters in the last days of the campaign. Radio Okapi also reported that in Katanga province a stock of Bemba posters being stored at the Kamina airport was destroyed in a fire.

¶17. (U) Bemba's deputy campaign director Pastor Theodore Ngoy was harassed again while campaigning in Lubumbashi October 24. While driving to a campaign meeting, Radio Okapi reported that a crowd of presumed pro-Kabila supporters stoned his convoy and later set fire to Ngoy's meeting place. Several people were reportedly injured during the incidents. MLC supporters also were reported to have defaced and burned Kabila posters in the city.

¶18. (U) MONUC military spokesman Lt. Col. Stephane Lescoffit said that MONUC and EUFOR, in cooperation with Congolese police and military units, are continuing to monitor the security situation. Lescoffit said joint security patrols to

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reduce weapons circulation in Kinshasa are still active. To date the "weapons-free Kinshasa" patrols have been instrumental in the arrests of 140 people and the confiscation of 34 weapons. MONUC military observers in Kinshasa monitoring military camps and installations have reported no unusual activity. In Ituri District, MONUC peacekeepers have deployed several mobile operating bases in the region to ensure that MONUC forces can respond immediately to any possible violence.

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